

FACTS



ABOUT WASTE MANAGEMENT

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SIMPLE COMPOSTING OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE

Composting is one means by which we can recover tangible benefit from our garbage and in so doing, reduce the volume of solid waste requiring disposal. It can become not only a hobby, but a beneficial and economical advantage to the home gardener.

The humus material from a compost heap has long been accepted as a soil additive and mulching agent which can be produced inexpensively in one's backyard. When added to the top soil, it improves texture, porosity and water holding capacity and increases the organic content of the soil.

HOW TO COMPOST:

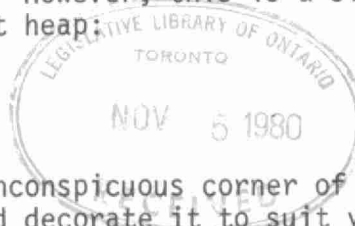
Generally speaking, composting involves taking organic waste material and placing it in a soil culture rich in natural organisms. The extent to which one gets involved in composting depends entirely upon the individual and the availability of the materials needed. However, this is a simple, inexpensive approach to constructing a compost heap;

LOCATION:

You can locate your compost heap in an inconspicuous corner of your yard or you can choose a central site and decorate it to suit your landscape. However, be sure that the spot is airy and sunny. If you are thinking about building a composting heap at your cottage, be sure that it is away from waterways and wells and at least one foot above the water table.

CONSTRUCTION:

Home composting is best done in some form of enclosure. Choose a size convenient to your needs, whether it's a three-foot square box or an enclosure 10 feet on a side. The pile can be as shallow as one foot or as deep as five feet.



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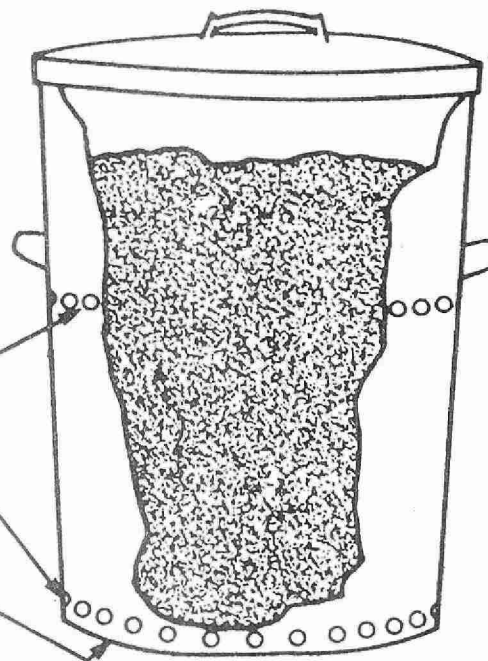
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Simple enclosure:

For small-scale, easy composting, the simplest approach is to take a large garbage can, a barrel or a wooden box and knock out the bottom and set it up to receive your organic wastes.

holes to allow circulation of air

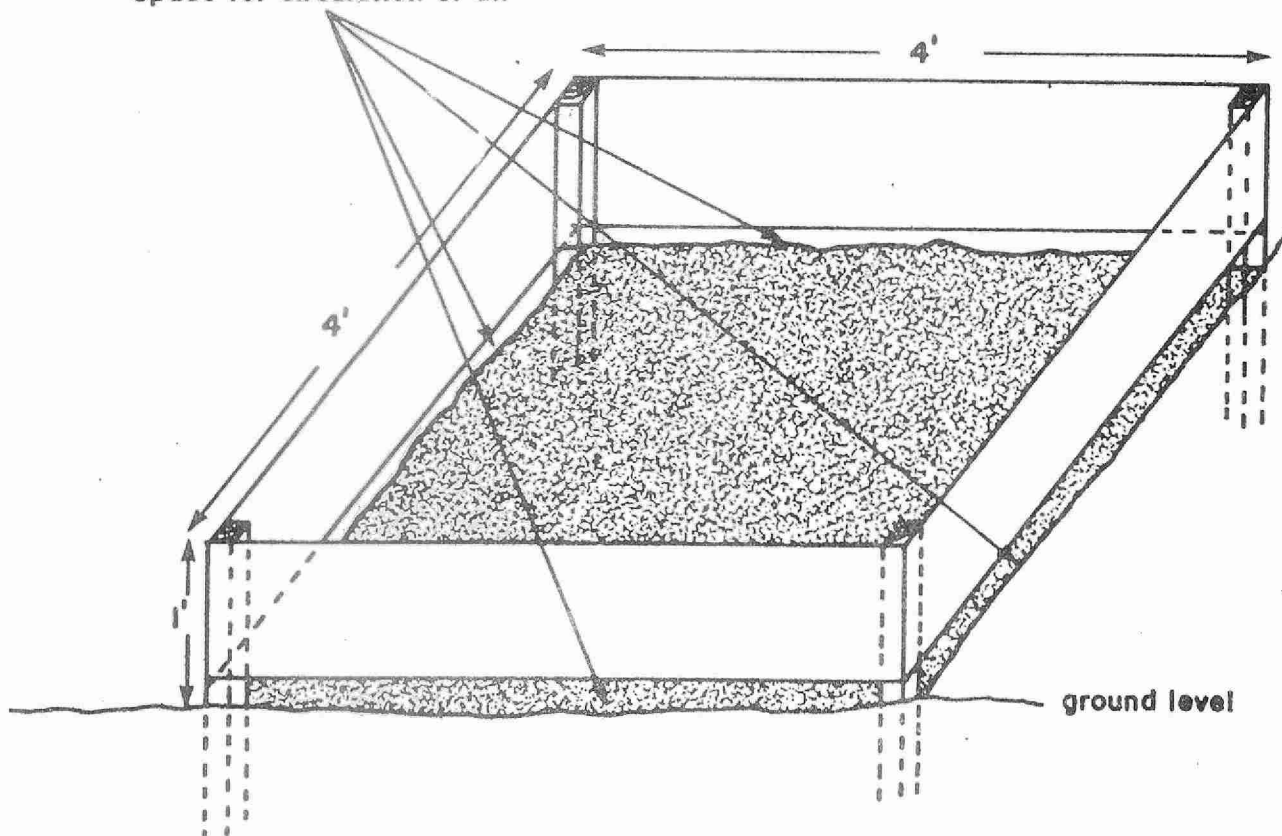
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Custom enclosure:

A composting enclosure can also be tailor-made in any size. These directions show how to build an enclosure four feet square rising one foot above ground level.

space for circulation of air



- Mark off a 4-foot square on the ground and dig a pit between 12 inches and 18 inches deep. The pit provides some warmth in winter months and keeps the compost damp in summer.
- Drive four stakes approximately 2" square by 2' long into the ground at the corners leaving 1' of the stake above ground.
- From a sheet (8' x 4') of quarter-inch aspenite plywood, cut four 1' x 4' rectangles and nail them to the stakes forming a 4' x 4' x 1' enclosure. Leave a small space, about one inch, around the bottom so that air can circulate up through the heap. The remaining half of the sheet will be used as a cover for your heap during winter. In summer, a sheet of heavy gauge plastic placed on a 4' x 4' frame of 2" stock will be used as a cover. This will keep your compost heap from being a breeding ground for insects and will also help retain moisture.

Your composting bin is now ready to receive your organic wastes.

COMPOSTING:

Many methods for adding waste material to compost heaps are used. The simplest is to add material as it becomes available. Be sure not to add thick layers of finely ground material such as sawdust. These materials will pack tight and prevent adequate circulation of air.

Another method is to arrange your compost heap into layers by placing a thin layer of a commercial starter (or fertilizer) between each 6" to 8" of garbage. The starter is used to increase the bacteria count and the fertilizer will increase the nutrient content of your pile.

Whichever method you choose, remember that for your compost heap to function adequately, it must be kept moist but not soggy. Every two or three weeks the pile should be turned. This mixes and aerates the raw compost.

While the garbage is decomposing, heat is produced. This heat should be contained by covering the pile. Heat keeps the natural organisms functioning effectively to decompose the waste.

After every turning of the heap, heat again builds up. When the heat production stops, your compost is ready to be used as low grade fertilizer and soil conditioner.

WHAT TO COMPOST:

Organic wastes are the main source of material for a composting heap. These are everyday household ingredients which can be added to a compost heap.

Kitchen garbage	*sawdust
vegetable and fruit peelings	*pet waste
coffee grounds	*newspaper
*egg shells	barbecue grill residues
*clam and oyster shells	straw and hay
peanut and nut shells	garden residues
leaves	grass clippings

*acceptable in small quantities.

With a little time and effort, and a minimum of expense, you can successfully reclaim some of your household wastes in compost and reduce, at least in part, some of your community's garbage problems.

For Further Information:

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